

REMARKS

The office action of January 19, 2005 has been reviewed and its contents carefully noted. Reconsideration of this case, as amended, is requested. Claims 1 through 5 remain in this case.

Rejection(s) under 35 U.S.C. §102

Claims 1-5 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Bowman, et al..

6,169,986. Applicants respectfully disagree with the rejection.

Bowman teaches a suggestive search engine *which suggests related terms to the user to allow the user to refine a search*. The related terms are generated using query term correlation data which reflects the **frequencies** with which specific terms have **previously** appeared within the same query. The **correlation data** is generated and stored in a look-up table using an off-line process which **parses a query log file**. The table is *regenerated periodically* from the most recent query submissions (e.g., the last two weeks of query submissions), and thus strongly reflects the *current preferences* of users. Each **related term** *is presented to the user via a respective hyperlink* which can be selected by the user to submit a modified query. In one embodiment, the related terms are added to and selected from the table so as to guarantee that the modified queries will not produce a NULL query result. (Emphasis added)

In the instant, Final Rejection, the Office Action states, *inter alia*

Applicant[s] argues Bowman et al (US 6,169,986) does not teach the limitation [that] the narrow search term is enter by the customer however Examiner respectfully disagrees. Bowman teaches this limitation at *col. 14, lines 26-36*. Bowman teaches a user selecting a hyperlink "outdoor trail-bike" and the search engine performing the search which is essentially the

same as a customer entering the search term. ... Bowman provides two means for [a] user to enter a narrow search term. (Emphasis added)

FIG. 9 The relevant paragraph (i.e. col. 14, lines 26-36) cited by the Examiner is listed below for her benefit.

FIG. 9 illustrates a sample query result page 900 in which a user has performed a subject field search on the terms "OUTDOOR TRAIL" and has received a set of **three related terms**, each of which is incorporated into a respective hyperlink 910. The page will also typically contain a listing of the query result items 920. If the user clicks on the hyperlink "OUTDOOR TRAIL--BIKE," the search engine will perform a search using the terms "S-OUTDOOR," "S-TRAIL," and "S-BIKE," and will then return the associated items. The query result page 900 may also have search fields (not shown) for allowing the user to edit the query. (Emphasis added)

Applicants respectfully disagrees with the Office Action's assertion and submits that the essence of Bowman's teachings include providing a search refinement system and method for generating and displaying **related query terms** ("related terms"). In accordance with the invention, the related terms are generated by using query term correlation data that is based on historical query submissions to the search engine. The query term correlation data ("correlation data") is preferably based at least upon the frequencies with which specific terms have *historically* been submitted together within the *same* query. The incorporation of such historical query information into the process tends to produce **related terms** that are frequently used by other users in combination with the submitted query terms, and significantly increases the *likelihood* that **these related terms** will be helpful to the search refinement process. To further increase the likelihood that the **related terms** will be helpful, the correlation data is preferably generated **only from** those historical query submissions that produced a successful query result (at least one match).

Claim 1 recites, *inter alia*

A method of narrow search for books on the Internet comprising the steps of:

(a) under control of a vendor server system, storing book identifying information in a main database;

....

(c) under control of the vendor server system, in response to **the search term entered by the customer** in the means for entering a search term, accessing the main database to match the search term with the book identifying information and retrieve a search result comprising the book identifying information matching the search term;

....

As can be seen, claim 1 does NOT use related terms such as bike, etc. In other words, the “outdoor trail-bike” hyperlink is NOT the same as a customer entering a search term since the hyperlink includes, at least in part, **historical** query submissions to the search engine which are frequently used by other users and may NOT be submitted by a current costumer. On the other hand, Bowman uses related terms generated using query term correlation data which reflects the **frequencies** with which specific terms have previously appeared within the same query. As stated supra, the “outdoor trail-bike” hyperlink example cited by the Examiner is an exemplified case of related terms described in Bowman, in which related terms other than whatever search term entered by the customer is used. Therefore, the user selecting a hyperlink “outdoor trail-bike” and the search engine performing the search which is NOT the same as a customer entering the search term at least for the simple reason that the customer does not know about the hyperlinks, and has NO intention of entering a related term (bike) until the same is offered for her selection.

Therefore, the claimed search term is NOT the related terms such as the “outdoor trail-bike” hyperlink in Bowman.

It is respectfully submitted that the rejection of independent claim 1 as being anticipated by *Bowman* is overcome. Dependent claims 2-5 being dependent upon and further limiting independent claim 1, should also be allowable for that reason, as well as for the additional recitations they contain. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection are respectfully requested.

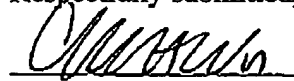
Conclusion

Applicant believes the claims, as amended, are patentable over the prior art, and that this case is now in condition for allowance of all claims therein. Such action is thus respectfully requested. If the Examiner disagrees, or believes for any other reason that direct contact with Applicants' attorney would advance the prosecution of the case to finality, he is invited to telephone the undersigned at the number given below.

Recognizing that Internet communications are not secured, I hereby authorize the PTO to communicate with me concerning any subject matter of this application by electronic mail. I understand that a copy of these communications will be made of record in the application file.

Dated: April 18, 2005

Respectfully submitted,



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